

Appendix B

USDA Food Security

Seeking to cut hunger in America in half by the year 2015, the USDA Community Food Security Initiative is creating and expanding grass-roots partnerships that build local food systems and reduce hunger. USDA is joining with States, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and the private sector to strengthen local food systems by replicating best practices of existing efforts and by catalyzing new community commitments to fight hunger. Included below are the USDA's definition of food security and the initiative goals and methods to achieve them.

USDA Definition of Food Security

The U.S. Action Plan on Food Security defines "food security" as: "When all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life." There are three key elements to food security:

1. Physical and economic access to food by individuals and households.
2. Adequate availability of food.
3. Full utilization of food, a balanced, adequate diet, safe water, sanitation, education and health care.

When communities lack one or more of the factors that create food security, they are considered "food-insecure" or suffer from "food insecurity." Hunger and under-nutrition are the potential results and symptoms of food insecurity.

USDA Goals

1. Creating new - and enhancing local existing – **local infrastructures** to strengthen local food systems to reduce hunger and food insecurity.
2. Increasing **economic and job security** by helping low-income people obtain living wage jobs to attain self-sufficiency.
3. Strengthening the **federal nutrition assistance safety net** by supporting the full and efficient use of programs such as food stamps, WIC, school meals, summer feeding and TEFAP.
4. Bolstering **supplemental food provided by non-profit groups** by aiding food recovery, gleaning and food donation programs.
5. Improving community **food production and marketing** by aiding projects that grow, process and distribute food locally.
6. Boosting **education and awareness** by increasing efforts to inform the public about nutrition, food safety and food security.
7. Improving **research, monitoring and evaluation** efforts to help communities assess and strengthen food security.

Methods USDA Will Use:

- Catalyzing the development of new partnerships on the local, State and Federal levels to help communities reduce hunger.
- Improving the coordination between existing USDA programs – such as nutrition assistance programs, community food grants, and ongoing research, farmers' markets and food recovery projects – and related Federal, State and community initiatives.
- Expanding technical assistance to States, communities and nonprofit groups to build long-term local structures to increase food security.
- Increasing public awareness of the causes of food insecurity and highlight innovative community solutions to hunger.